

Testimony for March 3, 5pm for the Appropriations Secondary Education Sub-committee

Senator Bye, Representative Walker, Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Secondary Education Sub-committee: My name is Christine Salcedo and I am the Program Coordinator for early childhood and family programs at the New London Youth Service Bureau, referred to as New London Youth Affairs.

Thank you for supporting the success of children and families in Connecticut communities. I am very concerned about the impact that the proposed deep budget cuts for Youth Service Bureaus will have on New London youth and families.

On behalf of the New London Youth Service Bureau, referred to as New London Youth Affairs, I am requesting that you:

1. Restore the proposed funding cut from the Department of Education Youth Service Bureau Cost Sharing Grant.
2. Restore funding to the eliminated Department of Education Enhancement grant line item.
3. Maintain Youth Service Bureaus within the Department of Education; not within the Department of Children and Families management.

I coordinate the New London Youth Affairs Early Childhood Family Center, targeting school readiness. The first five years of life are critical to a child's success in school.

162 children/family members are enrolled in the Family Center this year. Last year, 87% of age eligible children were placed in a toddler/pre-school program. The Family Center partners regularly with dozens of community organizations.

Family Center objectives include:

1. Children are assessed, supported, and improve regarding early childhood developmental milestones
2. Early childhood school readiness skills are developed
3. Children are placed in preschool slots
4. Early childhood families are connected to educational/social/health services
5. Families have access to free books, academic supplies, and basic need items

I strongly request your support to restore funding to Youth Service Bureaus, thereby contributing to essential services for New London children. Thank you for your commitment.